

# PRESS RELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

February 6, 2009

## Contact Person

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Assistant U.S. Attorney

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Niketa Williams, 32, San Francisco, was sentenced on January 21, 2009, by U.S. District Judge William Alsup of the Northern District of California in San Francisco to 46 months in prison and ordered to pay \$1.69 million in restitution to her victims following convictions for wire fraud committed in both the Western District of Wisconsin and the Northern District of California. Williams pleaded guilty to these charges in California on October 1, 2008.

Between 2003 and 2008, Williams, a native of Thailand and formerly of Eau Claire, Wis., engaged in a fraud scheme in which she claimed to be a diamond broker. Numerous individuals invested approximately \$1.7 million in her business, East Asia Trading Company. Instead of buying and selling diamonds as she claimed, Williams spent the money on living expenses and travel to Thailand.

Williams resided in Eau Claire from 2003 to 2007 and began defrauding investors while she was a resident of Wisconsin. In early 2007, she moved to San Francisco and continued her fraud scheme.

She was arrested in 2008 and originally charged in the Northern District of

California. After her arrest, law enforcement officers learned that she also had several victims in Wisconsin. As part of her plea agreement, Williams was allowed to plead guilty to her conduct involving the Wisconsin victims in federal court in California.

The charges against Williams were the result of an investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Paul W. Connell in Wisconsin and Tracie L. Brown in California.

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